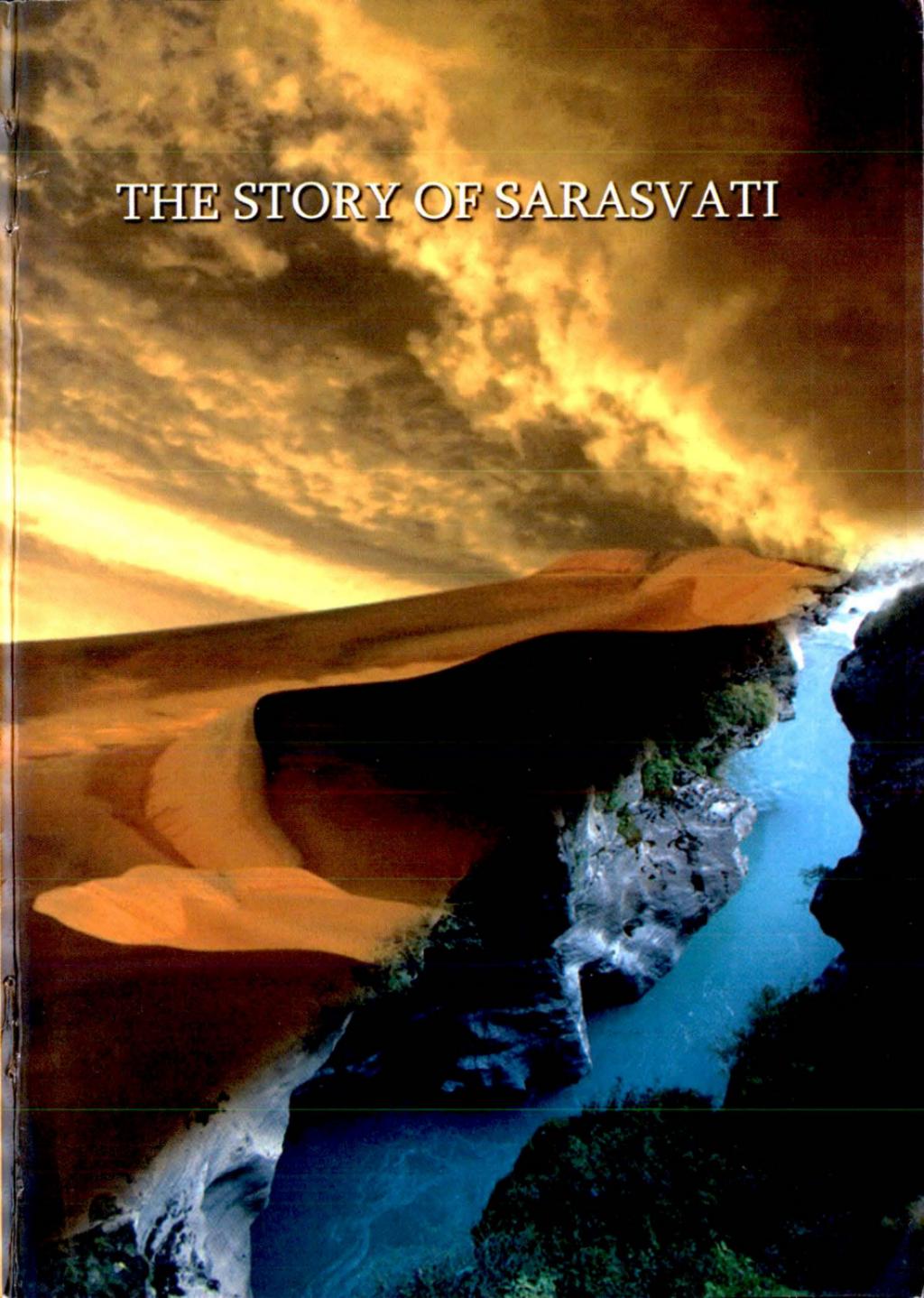
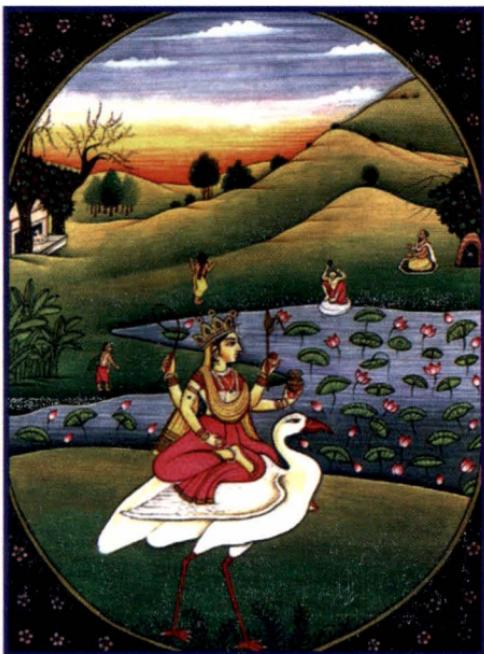


# THE STORY OF SARASVATI





'O the best among mothers,  
the best among rivers,  
the best among goddesses...'  
(ambitame naditame devitame, Rgveda 2.41.16)

# **THE STORY OF SARASVATI**



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## Preface

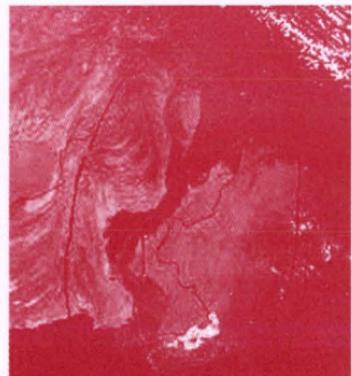
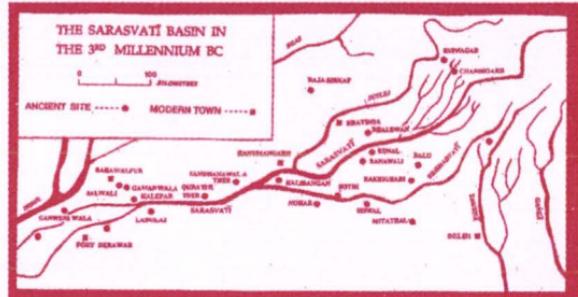
River Sarasvati occupies a very significant and also a predominant place in the history of our Mother country Bharat. It was on the banks of this historical river, that the earliest Aryan civilization which is the seed bed of our country's culture and civilization began. So, it is very important and interesting to read this small book about the history of this glorious river Saraswati, its origin, its course through various places and its surroundings.

Why this great and glorious river dried up is indeed still a mystery. Of course, there are many Pauranic stories and some of them are even proved by the modern scholars of geography explaining it through the tectonic movements of the earth. If the real reason behind this mystery is cleared up, then we hope that it will be easy to fix the date of the Vedic age and its civilization in our history. Actually where exactly the date of the origin of our Vedic age will go—who can predict?

We hope and pray that this small book will provide the necessary inspiration for our future historians who will take up this glorious work, and clear up this mystery of our history.

Pravrajika Atandraprana and sisters have put their efforts to compile this book. We are thankful to Arpita Mitra for her valuable contribution.

Pravrajika Amalaprana  
General Secretary  
Ramakrishna Sarada Mission





## **Beginning of an Enchanting Story**

Sister Nivedita, in her *Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda*, recollects about her days, from 14-20 June in 1898 with Swami Vivekananda in Punjab in the following words, ‘It was at twilight, crossing one of these stony tracts, that he told us of that great vision which came to him years ago, while he was still new to the ways of the life of a monk, giving back to him...the ancient mode of Sanskrit chanting. “It was evening,” he said, “in that age when the Aryans had only reached the Indus. I saw an old man seated on the bank of the great river. Wave upon wave of darkness was rolling in upon him, and he was chanting from the *Rig-Veda*. Then I awoke and went on chanting. They were the tones that we used long ago”.’

At some other place, she refers to this incident, as Swamiji recalling his own previous incarnation. Archaeologists and scientists may dig places outside; they may even dig below the ocean to find out about an ancient kingdom that drowned eons ago. But here we see Swamiji digging into his own past, recalling an age which is still under the mist. It is quite possible, that a

race may have its entire past history deep in its subconscious.

### An Ancient Race Recollects

Long long ago, India, Africa, Australia—together constituted one large land mass called the Gondavana situated at the present day Antarctica. The Indian land mass broke away from the Gondavana land mass and floated up towards the Asian Plateau. It was an island then; but for how long? Nobody can say exactly. That may be the reason that Sanskrit has hundreds of synonyms for water, but no such reference to desert. It was still a land mass almost of the shape of a triangle, which included present Indonesia, Myanmar, Java, Sumatra, Mauritius and other smaller islands—and was designated as Greater India. That may be the explanation why India shares some of the customs, traditions and culture with these land masses. This triangular patch of land was called "*Jambu Dvipa*" in our ancient scriptures. Contrary to the notion that Indians did not have any type of chronicling of events, we find in all our scriptures, on every so called mythological or historical event, a few lines such as "*adya-brahmanah dvitiya-parardhe shveta-varaha-kalpe vaivasvata-manvantare ashtavimsatitame kaliyuge prathame pade jambu-dvipe bharata-varshe bharata-khande meroh dakshine parshve etc. etc...*"

which designated space and time coordinates of certain events that took place.

Nearly about one lakh twenty thousand years ago, this land mass finally dashed against the Asian plateau, and the Himalayas were created. Geological history of the earth shows that every 27,000 years, the ice age covers the earth. Over 13,000 years have passed since the last ice age. A huge deluge (flood) follows every ice age when most of the biological specimens drown and become extinct in a deluge of water. Only those land portions near equatorial regions however were saved from this ultimate destruction as they had warmer weather. Since the rise of Himalayas, five ice ages have passed. Even today, tectonic changes are taking place in the region.

Our mythology says that the whole of India is divided into fields or *Kshetras* named after the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, for example Sri Rama *Kshetra*, Sri Krishna *Kshetra* etc. It is no wonder that these ancient land masses were named after the most ancient incarnations—just like Kerala was called *Matsya Kshetra*, Karnataka as *Adivaraha Kshetra*, Andhra as *Nrisimha Kshetra* etc.

### **Manu and his People**

Manu is a Vedic figure and is a part of south Asian Mythology, extending to Indonesia. He is the original king and law giver for ancient India and was also referred to as a great Yogi. We come across his name in the *Rgveda*.

In the *Matsya Purana*, the original Manu did his austerities on the Malaya mountains in Kerala, showing his southern origins. Now, Keralites have a notion that, long long back Manu was their king and was doing *tapasya* in a certain place there and they still name it after him. It seems that in one such *manvantara* (period of time), he had an intuition that there would be a huge deluge and all the people on the coastal regions would be destroyed (as it happens after every ice age). He was ordered (or had an intuition) to leave the place immediately and go for the green pastures newly created in the north. The *Satapatha Brahmana* deals with this particular flood in detail. It describes how a small fish appeared when Manu was performing his morning ablution and how finally it grew and grew and helped Manu and his people out of danger from great floods. (It is interesting to note that this story is also found in A-brahmanic religions like Judaism, Islam and Christianity in the form of the story of Noah and the Great Flood. Noah too was told by God to save people from a great flood that would cover the earth and he too was led to safety by a large fish.)

## The Story of Sarasvati

People thus migrated to the North and found newly born rivers and fertile lands on the bank of Sarasvati. They called the river “Ila”. She was also referred to as daughter of Manu. There was no external war as such, but petty quarrels with mountain people – tribes such as *kinnaras*, *gandharvas* etc. These were innocent people of nature who used to sing, dance and make merry. There was plenty from nature and they had nothing much to bother. The new settlers on the banks of the Sarasvati who had migrated from south to north came to be called Aryans. There was no word called ‘Dravidian’. Arya in Sanskrit means clear, as in light consciousness (spiritual purity), not light skinned person of another separate race. In the Vedas, the word Aryan means an ethical, social and spiritual ideal of a well governed life, for someone who was noble, straightforward in their dealings, courageous, gentle, kind, compassionate, protector of the weak, eager for knowledge and displayed respect for the wise and learned. This puts to rest the infamous Aryan Invasion Theory.

Keralites claim that Malayalam is the *Adi* language (original language), which existed before Sanskrit and that is why they have many words common with Sanskrit. Modern linguists believe that the original Malayalam was a dialect without a written script. This language evolved into a more complex language with written script and defined grammatical rules on the

banks of the Sarasvati. So, the language came to be known as Sanskrit (the one which became cultured). As they got proper language on its shores, the river itself was praised as “Vag-devi” (Giver of the language). The Aryans who settled on its banks had plenty of leisure to pursue knowledge; so, as Mathematics and other sciences flourished on its banks, she came to be known as “goddess of learning”—Gradually she was deified “*ambitame, naditame, devitame sarasvati*”.

*Nadi Sukta* firmly locates the position of Sarasvati, the great post-ice age river between Sutlej and Yamuna. Unfortunately after some tectonic movements, both these rivers abandoned the Ila as Sarasvati was then called, and she started drying off and became a chain of lakes (*Saras*). That is how she acquired the name Sarasvati (6000 BP). This is a fact that conclusively proves that Vedic age existed before 4000 BC. Now our research scholars, geologists, atomic scientists and archeologists are finally proving the existence of Sarasvati scientifically. And on its banks, 2200 ancient cities have been discovered. Due to drying of Sarasvati, people have shifted naturally towards Gangetic plains and the southern plateau and came to be known as “Gouda Saraswat” and “Saraswat” race respectively.

So, finally the mist is clearing up. The fictitious theories of ‘Aryan invasion’ and ‘Aryan–Dravidian’

divide also will be put to rest. So, we are hoping to discover better days soon.

### **ARYAN INVASION THEORY AND THE ARYA-DAVID PROBLEM**

#### **What is Aryan Invasion Theory?**

For generations, Indian students grew up reading that the Harappan Civilization, the first civilization of India, disappeared because of an “invasion” by a group of people called the “Aryans”. The Aryans supposedly came from outside, killed or ousted the Harappans from their cities and founded the Vedic civilization in India. This theory of “invasion” was basically a piece of fiction, conceived in 1946-47 by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the-then Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India. The basis of this theory was some “circumstantial evidence” that will appear to be flimsy upon close scrutiny. In earlier archaeological excavations, skeletons had been found in Mohenjodaro. This seemed to suggest the sudden death of people in violent conflict. Wheeler connected the already-known existence of such skeletons with the Rig-Vedic story of Indra destroying forts or fortified cities. He, thus, concluded that the “Aryans” (represented by their god Indra) destroyed the Harappan cities and massacred the Harappan people to the point of extinction (later, there

was yet another fictive turn to this story: that the Harappans were basically Dravidians and were driven away to the south by the invading Aryans).

Many archaeologists, like George Dales and B. B. Lal questioned Wheeler's interpretation of the skeletal remains at Mohenjodaro. Upon close scientific scrutiny, it was concluded that the concerned skeletons were found in layers of earth belonging to different periods. Since these skeletons do not date from the same period, any kind of large-scale massacre is out of question! Furthermore, there are no findings whatsoever—no

weapons, no artefacts—that would suggest an “invasion”. Notwithstanding this lack of direct evidence, the fiction of an “Aryan invasion” reigned as gospel truth for many decades.

Finally, in 2010, the NCERT brought out a History textbook for Class XII that clearly stated that the Aryan Invasion Theory is untenable in the light of hard evidence.

### **From Invasion to Immigration**

However, some historians are not willing to give up the idea of the “foreign” origin of the so-called Aryans. Now that the debate over the Aryan invasion has been put to rest, these writers are now arguing for an Aryan

Immigration Theory! So, the fiction of Aryans coming from outside and settling in India once again enters the scene, but this time, through the back door! It is now given the respectable name of “immigration” instead of “invasion”. According to these scholars, the Aryans were essentially “pastoral cattle breeders” who entered the Indian mainland through the north-western border, in small hordes over a period of time. The argument of migration in small waves has to be made, because there is no evidence whatsoever—archaeological, textual, genetic—of any large-scale migration into the Indian mainland. Facts belie such a claim; yet, once again, such outlandish claims are made, because it is rigidly ingrained in the colonized minds of these historians that the Aryans—our predecessors—cannot be of Indian origin.

But where did these Aryans come from? There is no agreement over this! Different homelands have been ascribed to the Aryans on different occasions. The latest argument is that these “pastoralists” came from the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) that is located in Bactria in northern Afghanistan and Margiana in Turkistan. However, the BMAC was actually a highly evolved culture with elaborate monumental buildings, richly carved out sculptures depicting humans and animals, and other features. This

culture was the creation of people who could have been anything but “pastoral cattle-breeders”!

Victor I. Sarianidi, an eminent archaeologist, however, argues that the BMAC people were the ancestors of the Indian Aryans. He argues that there are striking similarities between motifs on BMAC seals and those found on engravings of the Syro-Hittite people who lived in northern Syria and southern Anatolia between 1180 and 700 BC. Again, it is well-known that Vedic gods find mention in the Hittite-Mittani treaty as depicted in the inscription found in Bogazkoy in Turkey. Sarianidi joins these two together and concludes that in such a case, the BMAC people must have been the ancestors of the Aryans who migrated to India. B. B. Lal points out that this is not a strong enough evidence for arguing that Aryans came to India from the BMAC, as it fails to show any direct and concrete correlation between the BMAC and Vedic cultures. In a similar way, Sarianidi makes other far-fetched conclusions that are essentially conjectures, lacking any basis in solid direct evidence. In his latest book, B. B. Lal systematically refutes all these claims.<sup>1</sup> Lal also says that if one studies carefully the map indicating the distribution of BMAC cultural elements across the world, one will see that these elements are not found in the region east of the Indus. Hence, there are no cultural elements in common between the BMAC and the Vedic peoples.

### **The myth of the foreign origin of Aryans**

This false notion of the foreign origin of the Aryans has indeed been venerated for a very long time. It has its origins in pure imagination. This theory was first formulated probably as an explanation to the puzzle of caste domination in India (the assumption was that people belonging to the superior castes must have come from outside). With Max Mueller and his followers, this fictitious theory acquired linguistic dimensions and further researches in the area of “Indo-European” philology consolidated it. Now, this theory was based on the linguistic affinities between different languages belonging to the so-called Indo-European family. Gradually the concept of “Aryan” came to acquire racial dimensions (it is important to note that in ancient India, the word ‘Arya’ was used to denote a quality, not a race; the word ‘Arya’ literally meant ‘noble’). And finally, the pernicious theory of Aryan/Dravidian divide and conflict came to be formulated.

According to Nikolas Kazanas, this theory of Aryans arriving in India in small waves does not explain how the aryanisation of such a large area was possible. He writes:

“Why should the natives abandon their own language(s) and adopt the very difficult language of the Aryans? Vedic is an extremely complex language with singular, dual and plural for nouns and verbs; with 8

cases in each number for the nouns and many classes of nouns, masc, fem and neuters. The verbs have present, past and future tenses, subjunctives and optatives and the past tense (aorist) alone is of 6 or 7 kinds! If there was no conquest and coercion why would the natives adopt such a difficult language? There were no schools, no mass media, no central government with a Ministry of Education. How do we resolve this paradox?

Then, we know the native Harappans had literacy as is shown by their seals but no literature! But the incoming Aryans had no writing as evidenced by the *RV*. Thus we have a strange paradox. On the one hand a culture with literacy but no literature, other than the still undeciphered seals. And an oral culture without literacy but an enormous literature – the Vedas. Both in the selfsame region and at about the selfsame period. How do we resolve this second paradox?"<sup>2</sup>

**Lack of evidence to support  
the idea of migration**

We have already seen that there is no solid archaeological evidence to support the idea of a migration from outside. No pottery, utensils, tools, weapons, graves or any form of art bear testimony to the "arrival" of the Aryans in India.

J. M. Kenoyer wrote that there is “no archaeological or biological evidence for invasions or mass migrations into the Indus Valley between the end of the Harappan phase, about 1900 BCE and the beginning of the Early Historical Period around 600 BCE.”

Secondly, the most remarkable fact is that the rich Vedic literature makes absolutely NO reference to any migration of the so-called Aryans from anywhere to India.

No Indian scripture makes any mention of a previous homeland outside India. In fact, the Vedic homeland most frequently referred to in the Rgveda is Sapta-sindhu, in other words, the Indus and Sarasvati basins, which is exactly where the Harappan civilization flourished. Swami Vivekananda had said: *There is not one word in our scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryans ever came from anywhere outside India....* One scholar had tried to suggest that the flora and fauna as described in the Vedic literature belong to a temperate climate; hence, the Aryans came from outside. B. B. Lal has systematically refuted this claim and showed how the trees (like *asvattha*, *kimsuka*, *khadira* etc.) and animals (like *vrisabha*, *simha*, *hasti*, *mayura* etc.)

mentioned in the Rig Veda are found in a tropical climate; furthermore, no cold-climate flora and fauna are mentioned in the text.

Thirdly, according to some major US anthropologists who worked on India,...

...there is no evidence of any “demographic disruption” in north-western India between 4500 and 800 BCE. This negates the possibility of any Aryan migration from outside.

Furthermore, nine major studies conducted with the help of scientifically advanced techniques in genetic research, show that there was no arrival of the Central Asian gene pool around the time as argued by proponents of the AIT. Michel Danino remarks: “Just as the imaginary Aryan invasion/migration left no trace in Indian literature, in the archaeological and the anthropological record, it is invisible at the genetic level. The agreement between these different fields is remarkable by any standard, and offers hope for a grand synthesis in the near future...”<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, experts analyzing the skeletons found in Harappan cities (especially in Sindh, Punjab and Gujarat) concluded that the physical traits of their

inhabitants were not markedly different from those of the populations found in the same regions today. There is no sign of any sudden disruption in population patterns, only the gradual changes that one would expect to take place naturally over the centuries. Towards the end of the Harappan civilization, there was clear eastward movement and more precisely towards the Gangetic basin.

Then how do we explain the evidence found in Turkey about the presence of Aryans around the fourteenth century BC? How to account for the genuine similarities between the languages of the so-called Indo-European family?

Some scholars who argue for an indigenous origin of the Vedic Aryans, accept that there was migration, but this migration was not from somewhere else to India, but from India to other places. Hence, the Aryan Immigration Theory (AIT) now stands countered with the Out of India Theory (OIT).

Thus, we see that many scholars strongly disagree with the claims made for any kind of Aryan invasion or immigration. Among them are reputed archaeologists such as B. B. Lal, Dilip Chakrabarti, S. R. Rao, V. N. Misra, J. P. Joshi, S. P. Gupta, R. S. Bisht, K. M.

Srivastava, Madhav Acharya, Jim Shaffer, J. M. Keyoner, G. F. Dales, J. F. Jarrige, K. A. R. Kennedy and many others. They are joined by scholars from other fields, such as David Frawley, Koenraad Elst, N. S. Rajaram, Subhash Kak, Klaus Klostermaier, K. D. Sethna, A. K. Biswas, Shrikant Talageri, and Bhagwan Singh. All of them agree that archaeological evidence does not point towards Aryan invasion or immigration, but actually goes against it; many of them also find quite shaky the linguistic evidence used to buttress the theory of the foreign origin of Aryans. But this debate, as we shall see, is by no means limited to the academic world; it is not a dry scholarly matter, but has far-reaching repercussions on today's India, especially where her unity is concerned.

### Does Sarasvati River belie Aryan Immigration Theory?

Now, there is another dimension to this story. You will read in detail about the fascinating story of the river Sarasvati. Here, it may be stated briefly that the highest concentration of Harappan settlements is found along a huge and now dry river, which has been

It is the river Sarasvati that is the greatest proof that the Vedic Aryans were indigenous people of India.

identified by scientists as the river Sarasvati that once flowed across Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Sindh and Gujarat, finally flowing into the Arabian sea in Kutch. Its exact course has been plotted by geologists and confirmed by satellite photography. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has found that in parts of Rajasthan, "in extreme desert conditions," the water of the once-active river Sarasvati now "remains available at a depth of fifty to sixty metres". Radiocarbon measurements of some of these water samples have shown them to "range from 2400 to 7400 Before Present," with "no modern recharge discernible." It so happens that the Sarasvati dried up in stages, and its final disappearance has been scientifically dated to about 2000 BC. Now, Sarasvati is the river which is praised so often in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. Then why did the Aryans, who are supposed to have invaded India five hundred years later and to have composed the Rgveda still later, lavish so much praise on a long dried-up river? It stands to reason that the composers of the Vedic hymns lived near the Sarasvati while it was still in full flow, and the time in which the Sarasvati flowed is the Harappan era.

### **Was Harappan civilization Vedic?**

It is now recognized by many scholars that there are strong links and similarities between the Vedic and the Harappan cultures. Statues and seals depicting yogis

and yogic postures have been found in Harappan sites. In Kalibangan, one of the most important Harappan sites situated by the banks of the once-active Sarasvati River, we find a terracotta shiva linga. Worship of Mother-goddess seems to have been prevalent during Harappan times. In Kalibangan, archaeologist B. B. Lal discovered sacrificial fire altars that are an unmistakable sign of Vedic culture. Another scholar Gregory Possehl opines that Lal wrongly identifies cooking hearths to be sacrificial fire altars. In response to this criticism, Lal clearly mentions that actual cooking hearths already existed in other parts of the excavated site. That which he claims to be fire altars and that which he identifies as cooking hearths are different in terms of their structures and location in the site. Hence, his claim that sacrificial fire altars existed in Harappan sites is not unfounded—it is based on observation of features of these structures found in the site. Furthermore, Harappan symbols include the Trishul, the Swastika, the conch shell (also

All evidence, therefore, suggest that the Harappan civilization *is* the Vedic civilization.

This is also evident from the cultural continuity that can be noticed between the Harappan civilization and the present culture in those regions.

used as a trumpet), the Pipal tree, all of which are central to later Indian culture. On the other hand, the Rgveda itself is full of references to fortified cities and towns, to oceans, sailing, trade and industry, all of which are found in the Harappan civilization.

The cultural continuity suggests that there was no break in the civilization, as might have happened with the coming of foreign people.

**Does all this indicate something about the date of the Vedas?**

In the light of the above discussion, it can be argued that...

...the Rgveda is NOT to be dated around 1200 BC as was done tentatively by Max Mueller. It can be anything between 7000 to 5000 years old, or perhaps even older than that.

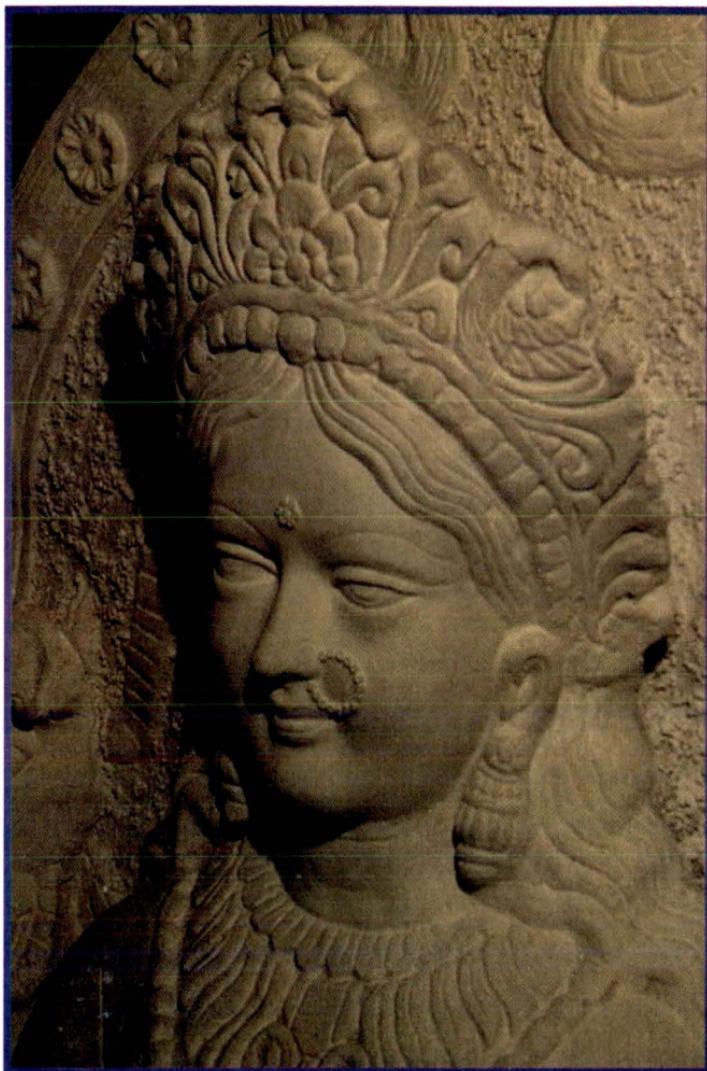
**What are the conclusions?**

1. There was never any Aryan invasion of or immigration to India. Our textbooks will have to be revised in the light of scientific findings. Michel Danino quotes Dr. Ambedkar: “The theory of [Aryan] invasion is an invention. It is a perversion of scientific

investigation, it is not allowed to evolve out of facts.... It falls to the ground at every point.” Danino further writes:

“Naturally, this new view will have considerable repercussions on the history of ancient India and of the ancient world, and we can safely predict that India will be shown to have been the source of much of Western civilization. This had been anticipated by a number of Western thinkers, such as the French philosopher Voltaire, who said more than two hundred years ago: *I am convinced that everything has come down to us from the banks of the Ganges, astronomy, astrology, metempsychosis, etc..It does not behove us, who were only savages and barbarians when these Indian and Chinese people were civilized and learned, to dispute their antiquity.*”

2. Danino continues, saying that “those who today still insist on Aryan-Dravidian divide do so not only in disregard of archaeological findings, but also in complete disregard of Indian tradition (whether from the North or from the South); they prefer to blindly follow a few nineteenth-century European scholars who made up the invasion theory simply because they would not accept that ancient civilization could have flowed out of India: it had to be the white man who brought it to India. Moreover, in that colonial age, they were eager to divide



MOTHER SARASVATI

(Picture 1)



**GHAGGAR RIVER**

(Picture 2)



**GHAGGAR-HAKRA RIVER**

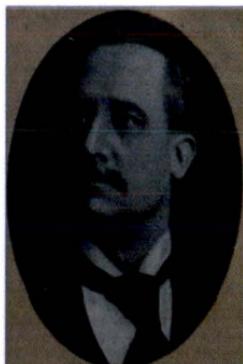
(Picture 3)



ADI BADRI  
(Picture 4)



LOUIS VIVIEN  
DE  
SAINT MARTIN  
(Picture 5)



MAJOR COLVIN  
(Picture 6)



**ARISTOBULUS**

(Picture 7)



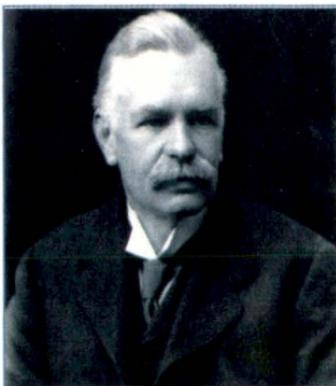
**STRABO**

(Picture 8)



**IBN BATTUTAH**

(Picture 9)

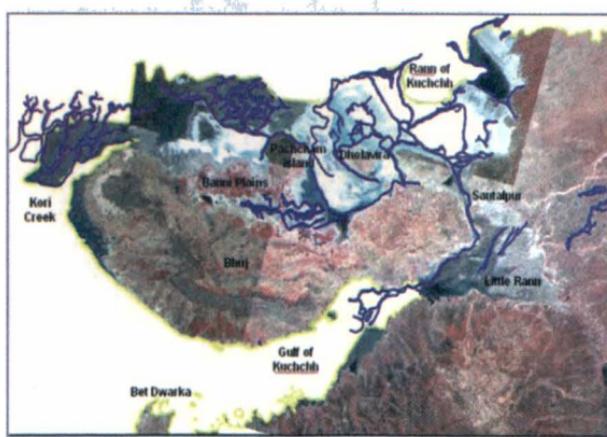


**RICHARD DIXON OLDHAM**

(Picture 10)



**KALIBANGAN (Picture 11)**



**SATELLITE IMAGE SHOWING  
SARASVATI PALAEO-DRAINAGE NETWORK  
IN RANN OF KACHCHH**  
(Picture 12)



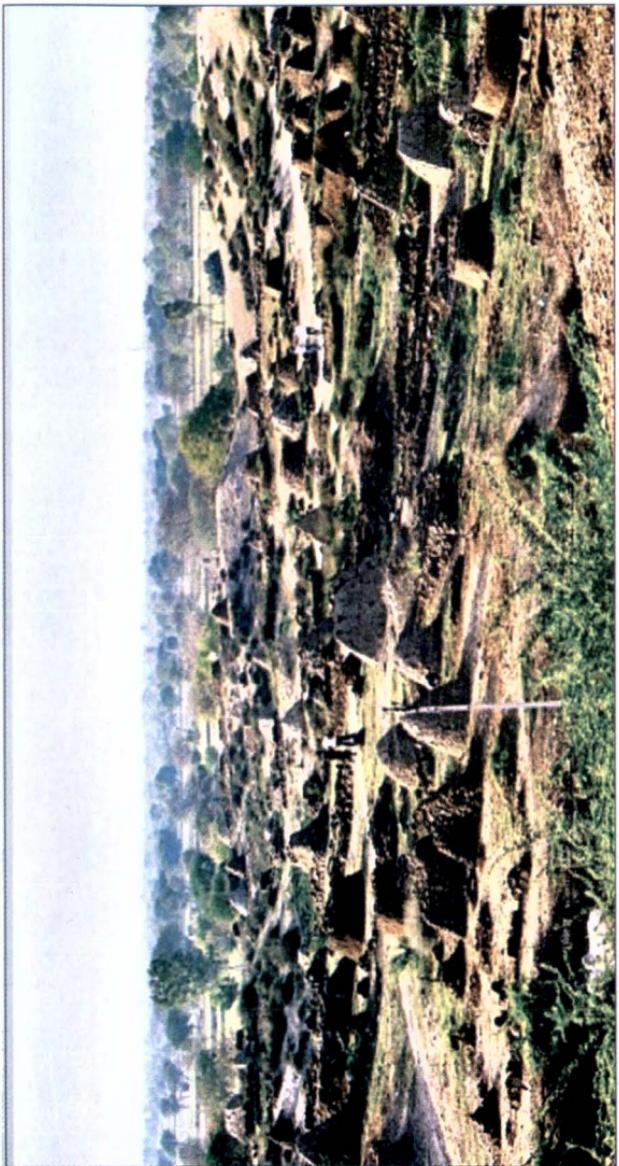
**ANCIENT WELL AT BANAWALI**

(Picture 13)



**BHIRRANA IN HARYANA**

(Picture 14)



RAKHIGARHI SITE (PICTURE 15)



DRAINAGE SYSTEM AT KALIBANGAN

(Picture 16)



GARBAGE AT RAKHIGARH!!  
HELP PEOPLE TO PRODUCE PUBLIC AWARENESS

(Picture 17)

India further into Aryan and Dravidian, North and South, upper and lower castes, so as to encourage conversions to Christianity and justify the British presence in India. Certain present-day followers of those scholars are equally interested in this job of division; the best proof of it is that they shy away from serious debates, preferring to hurl invectives at serious and respected archaeologists or historians, whom they call "communal," "parochial," etc. for suggesting, for instance, that Vedic culture was indigenous and formed the backdrop of the Harappan world. In other words, if you look into the problem objectively you are communal, while if you propagate outdated theories for political ends, you utter gospel truths which no one should dare dispute. This is not only unscientific and irrational, it is obscurantism plain and simple."

3. We can finally conclude that "Indian culture is essentially one, though with considerable regional variations, which only go to enrich it...I will end with these words from Sri Aurobindo: *A time must come when the Indian mind will shake off the darkness that has fallen upon it, cease to think or hold opinions at second and third hand and reassert its right to judge and enquire in a perfect freedom into the meaning of its own Scriptures. When that day comes we shall, I think, [...] question many established philological myths—the*

*legend, for instance, of an Aryan invasion of India from the north, the artificial and inimical distinction of Aryan and Dravidian which an erroneous philology has driven like a wedge into the unity of the homogenous Indo-Afghan race.”<sup>4</sup>*

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> For details, see B. B. Lal, *The Rigvedic People—‘Invaders’?/ ‘Immigrants’? or Indigenous? Evidence of Archaeology and Literature*, New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2015, pp. 25-35.

<sup>2</sup> Nikolas Kazanas, ‘The Collapse of the AIT and the prevalence of Indigenism: archaeological, genetic, linguistic and literary evidences’ ([http://www.omilosmeleton.gr/pdf/en/indology/The\\_Collapse\\_of\\_the\\_AIT\\_13\\_2\\_2013.pdf](http://www.omilosmeleton.gr/pdf/en/indology/The_Collapse_of_the_AIT_13_2_2013.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> Michel Danino, ‘Genetics and the Aryan Debate’ (<http://archaeologyonline.net/artifacts/genetics-aryan-debate>)

<sup>4</sup> <http://micheldanino.bharatvani.org/riddle.html>

## The Story of Sarasvati

Rgveda, the oldest known literary document of human civilisation, talks of a mighty river called Sarasvati, that flowed ‘from the mountains to the sea’<sup>1</sup>. It was a mighty river, ‘abounding in waters’<sup>2</sup>, ‘roaring’<sup>3</sup>, ‘fierce’<sup>4</sup>, ‘flowing rapidly’<sup>5</sup> and ‘moving faultlessly’<sup>6</sup>. Sarasvati was ‘the most impetuous of all other streams’<sup>7</sup> and ‘possessing unlimited strength’<sup>8</sup>.

The Sarasvati bestowed many material benefits on the people living along its banks. It was ‘rich in grains’<sup>9</sup>, ‘bestower of a lot of wealth’<sup>10</sup>, and ‘strong in wealth and power’<sup>11</sup>.

Unlike most other rivers which merely bring material abundance and comfort to the lives of the people around, Sarasvati bestowed on the people immense spiritual wealth as well. She was considered to be ‘auspicious’<sup>12</sup>, the ‘inspirer of those who delight in truth’<sup>13</sup> and ‘the instructor of the right minded’<sup>14</sup>. She awakened a great flood in the consciousness and illumined all the thoughts. The ‘purest of all rivers’<sup>15</sup>, she was herself a ‘purifier’<sup>16</sup>.

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To the Rgvedic people, Sarasvati (Picture 1) was ‘the dearest among the dear ones’<sup>17</sup>, ‘marked out for majesty among the mighty ones’<sup>18</sup>. She was extolled as ‘the best among mothers, the best among rivers, the best among goddesses’<sup>19</sup>.

According to the Rgveda, river Sarasvati flowed between the Yamuna and the Shutudri (Sutlej). In one of its verses (10.75.5-6), Rgveda names the rivers of that region in order from right to left:

*imam me gange yamune sarasvati sutudri stomam  
sacata parusnya*

*asiknya marudvrdhe vitastayarjikiye srnuhy a  
susomaya/*

*trstamaya prathamam yatave sajuh susartva rasaya  
svetya tya*

*tvam sindho kubhaya gomatim krumummehatnva  
saratham yabhiriyyase//*

O Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Shutudri (Sutlej), Parushni (Ravi), hear my praise! Hear my call, O Asikni (Chenab), Marudvridha (Maruvardhvan), Vitasta (Jhelum) with Arjikiya and Sushoma.

But where is the mighty Sarasvati River now? In the present map of India, it is nowhere to be seen! We have heard that Sarasvati flows invisibly at the Triveni Sangam in Allahabad. It is a river that literally became invisible. Let us now read the story of Sarasvati.

In reality, a part of what constituted the original

Sarasvati still flows in India. It is no longer the mighty river with abundant water as it used to be during the Rgvedic times. In its upper reaches, the river is known as Ghaggar (Picture 2), which is largely a seasonal stream. The Ghaggar rises in the Shiwaliks and enters the plains near Pinjore, about 20 kms to the northeast of Chandigarh. Then, it flows through Sirsa in Haryana and Hanumangarh and Suratgarh in Rajasthan. It is called Hakra (Picture 3) once it enters Pakistan near Anupgarh and finally disappears into the Cholistan Desert. This river does not cover its full course—towards the end, only a dry bed remains, which once had water but now, only the upper course of the river is fed by monsoon waters.

In his description of the Great Indian Desert in the famous *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1832), Lt. Col. James Tod records ‘the tradition of the absorption of the Caggar [Ghaggar] river, as one of the causes of the comparative depopulation of the northern desert’. A ‘couplet still sung among Rajputs...dates the ruin of this part of the country back to the drying up of the Hakra.’

The *Imperial Gazetteer of India* of 1885 gave the following descriptions of the rivers ‘Ghaggar’ and ‘Saraswati (Sarsuti)’:

Ghaggar: ‘In ancient times the lower portion of the river seems to have borne the name of its confluence the Saraswati or Sarsuti, which joins the main stream in

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Patiala territory. It then possessed the dimensions of an important channel...During the lower portion of its course, in Sirsa District, the bed of the Ghaggar is [now] dry from November to June...''

Sarasvati: This river rises 'in the low hills of Sirmur State, emerges upon the plain at Zadh Budri [Adi Badri (Picture 4)—near the Haryana-Himachal Pradesh border], a place esteemed sacred by all Hindus' and 'passes by the holy town of Thanesar and the numerous shrines of the Kurukshetra, a tract celebrated as a centre of pilgrimages....' before joining the Ghaggar. 'In ancient times, the united stream below the point of junction appears to have borne the name of Sarsuti [Sarasvati], and undiminished by irrigation near the hills, to have flowed across the Rajputana plains...''

It is noteworthy that the present-day town of Sirsa, on the Ghaggar, was known as Sarsuti in early medieval times, when Timur invaded India. The *Mahabharata* (12.59.111) also mentions a *tirtha* on the banks of the Sarasvati called Garga-srota (Ghaggar). This *tirtha* was named after the yogi, Garga, versed in astronomy, who lived there. The *Brahma Purana* (25.64) also mentions a *tirtha* called Ghargharika Kunda.

A seasonal stream by the name Sarsuti exists even today which has often been called Sarasvati in modern maps. This name is found on decades-old rail and road bridges crossing the dry bed of the stream. A nineteenth-

century French geographer, Louis Vivien de Saint-Martin (Picture 5), who had studied the region, was of the opinion that ‘the totality of the streams [namely, Ghaggar, Markanda and Sarsuti] flowing down from the mountain close to each other before they unite in a single bed’ appears to have received the designation of ‘Sarasvati’.

Major Colvin (Picture 6), British Superintendent of Canals, submitted a report in 1833, where he records: ‘What the country about and west of *Raneah* [Rania, near Sirsa in Haryana]...has been, may be inferred from the numerous sites of towns and villages scattered over a tract, where now fixed habitations are hardly to be met with. I allude only to the vicinity of the bed of the *Ghaghara*, with which I am personally acquainted;—when the depopulation took place, I am not prepared to say; it must have been long since, as none of the village sites present[s] one brick standing on another, above ground,—though, in digging beneath it, very frequent specimens of an old brick are met with, about 16 inches by 10 inches, and 3 inches thick, of most excellent quality: buildings erected of such materials could not have passed away in any short period. The evident cause of this depopulation of the country is the absolute absence of water...’

This record is from the nineteenth century. But, a history of depopulation in this area owing to the drying

up of a river bed was observed by various people since ancient times. Aristobulus (Picture 7) was a Greek historian who had accompanied Alexander on his campaign to India. Strabo (Picture 8), the famous Greek geographer of first century BCE, wrote that Aristobulus had recorded about ‘a tract of land deserted which contained more than a thousand cities with their villages, for the Indus, having forsaken its proper channel, turned itself into another on the left much deeper, into which it burst like a cataract, so that it no longer watered the country on the right, from which it receded’.

Some of these places were still of importance even at the time of the early Islamic invasions. This region is likely to have been fertile for a long time. Ibn Battutah (Picture 9) recorded six decades before Timur’s invasion that this region abounded in paddy fields. By the early twentieth century, however, this was no longer the case.

The river that Aristobulus refers to as having turned on the left is not Indus, but its tributary Sutlej. In an article written for the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1886, Richard Dixon Oldham (Picture 10), a British geologist, proposed that the ‘Lost River of the Indian desert was none other than the Sutlej, and that it was “lost” when the river turned westwards to join the Bias [Beas].’ Modern geologists like Gurudev Singh had identified, way back in 1952, ‘a wide dry channel coming south from the spot near Ropar where the Satluj

abruptly swings westward'. This palaeochannel meets the Ghaggar near Shatran, about 60 km south of Patiala, not far from the point where the Sarsuti joins the Ghaggar. On the basis of evidence, it is thus accepted today that Sutlej took a sharp westward turn near Rupar near Chandigarh and joined the Ghaggar, flowing about 50 kilometres to the east and entering the plains near Chandigarh.

Furthermore, Oldham had also suggested: 'It may have been...that the Jumna [Yamuna], after leaving the hills, divided its waters...and that the portion which flowed to the Punjab was known as the Saraswati while that which joined the Ganges was called the Yamuna.' This double desertion of the Sarasvati—by Sutlej on the one hand and by Yamuna on the other—resulted in the 'considerable change in the hydrography of the region'.

So, the three minor rivers Ghaggar, Sarsuti and Chautang flowed from the Shiwaliks through about an 80 km wide land stretching between Chandigarh and Yamunanagar. To the west of this stretch of land flows the present-day Sutlej, joining the Indus, and to the east, flows the Yamuna towards the Ganga. And the Rgvedic description of the location of the Sarasvati says that it flowed between the Sutlej and the Yamuna!

Michel Danino writes: 'Overlooking the Ghaggar, just upstream of its confluence with the Chautang, lies an important Harappan site: Kalibangan (Picture 11). In

1968, as excavations were nearing completion, US hydrologist Robert Raikes drilled a few bore holes in the Ghaggar's bed just north of the site, and found 'at a depth of about eleven metres below the present floodplain level, a coarse, grayish sand very similar in mineral content to that found in the bed of the present-day Yamuna. It extended over a width of at least four times that of the bed of the present-day Yamuna and down to a depth, at one point, of 30 metres.' In his opinion, this 'wide buried bed of coarse sand' was the result of 'an immediate post-glacial Yamuna, much enlarged by Himalayan ice-melt, flowing to the Indus system.'

On the basis of geological evidence, Indian geologist K S Valdiya concludes: 'Tectonic movements overtook the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, and the Aravali started slowly rising... The Sarasvati was forced to shift its course—progressively eastward... Uplift of the Aravali domain accentuated the pace of erosion of the terrain. Consequently, a branch of the Chambal River started cutting its course northwards... It cut the channel deeper than that of the Sarasvati, and thus beheaded the Sarasvati. During rains, the floodwater of the Sarasvati rushed into this new channel (later to be called Yamuna), culminating in the capture of the Sarasvati by the Chambal, the southwestern tributary of the Ganga... The reduced flow in the Sarasvati, coupled with the onset of

dry climatic conditions over western Rajasthan, forced the Harappans to migrate upstream and settle down in the foothills of the Siwalik domains.' Thus, the water of Sarasvati got diverted towards the Ganga basin. Since the water got diverted into Yamuna, and since Yamuna met Ganga at holy Triveni in Allahabad, thus, it is believed that Sarasvati too is present there in subtle form.

Valdiya further writes that the Aravali continued to rise, the newly formed Yamuna migrated progressively eastward and Sutlej moved westward. Satellite imageries confirm that Yamuna migrated 10 to 40 km since the time of Sri Krishna, who was born in a prison on the bank of the Yamuna. The dry channels of Wah, Naiwal and Sarhind prove the westward shift of the Sutlej. Finally, Sutlej took a spectacular U-turn at Rupar before joining the Beas of the Indus system (in time, the Asikni (Chenab), the Vipasa (Beas) and the Sindhu (Indus) itself shifted westward—the Sindhu shifting up to as much as 160 km westward). It is interesting to note that Sutlej was originally named 'Shutudri' or 'swift-flowing' in the Rig Veda; later in post-Vedic literature, it came to be known as 'Shatadru', which means 'of a hundred channels'.

Two popular legends record the change of course by Yamuna and Sutlej. One story recounts that it was Balarama who when angry with Yamuna, dragged her by

his ploughshare—which changed her original course. The other legend says that after losing all his sons, Rishi Vashishtha wanted to end his life. So, he jumped into a river, which thought that he was a ball of fire and therefore ‘immediately flew in a hundred different directions, and has been known ever since by the name of the Shatadru, the river of a hundred courses’. The shifting of the courses of Yamuna and Sutlej—which was a true historical event—was thus etched in popular memory and found expression in a symbolic manner in the form of these stories.

Thus, Sarasvati originated in the Himalayas and entered the plains at Adi Badri. It then flowed south-westernly through the present-day states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat before finally joining the Arabian Sea through the present-day Rann of Kachchh, which was probably an estuary that got silted later. The Sarasvati River lost most of its water due to tectonic movements, tributary diversions, climate change and became the invisible or subtle river ‘comprising of lakes’ on the way.

A whole gamut of scientific evidence has come to light that supports the existence of the Sarasvati River in

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the past. Some of them are as follows:

**Satellite images** - A NASA satellite launched in 1972 found a huge dried-up river bed in India from the Himalayas to the Rann of Kachchh hidden under the layers of sand, loam and silt, blown over thousands of years (Picture 12). This was undoubtedly the dried-up Sarasvati. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has identified fossil valleys of Vedic Sarasvati in the areas around Kurukshetra and other places in upper central Haryana. The actual river bed has been identified near Jyotisar (Kurukshetra).

**Examination of water samples** - In 1995, scientists from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) drew samples from wells in various parts of Rajasthan. They were surprised to find that in such a desert area, groundwater was available at the depth of 50-60 metres and a few dug wells did not dry up throughout the year. The groundwater actually flows subterraneously at an estimated speed of 20 m a year! Radiocarbon techniques suggested the approximate date of 3700 to 3200 BCE to these 'fossil waters'. It was also revealed that this water received very little recharge (mainly through rainfall) after this date. The Rajasthan Ground Water Department (RGWD) had noted years earlier that freshwater was available in many places of Jaisalmer district—which is

surprising, given that Jaisalmer's water is saline. Another study conducted by scientists in the Jaisalmer region in 1999 revealed that some tube-wells which had been in use for up to 40 years, had a stable supply of water. Other scientists asserted that the central Sarasvati river basin in Rajasthan could sustain a million tube-wells! Evidence points towards the fact that the underground flow is active.

**Geological evidence found at Adi Badri** - Adi Badri is the place where Sarasvati entered the plains. It is a pilgrimage centre, located some 15 km north of Bilaspur on the Haryana-Himachal Pradesh border. Bilaspur is originally Vyaspur, where Maharishi Ved Vyas lived. Nearby is a holy Sarasvati Kund in Sarasvati Nagar.

During 1971-74, B C Verma carried out a geological mapping of the area between the Markanda and Yamuna Rivers. V M K Puri, retired Director of Geological Survey of India, also writes that geological evidence found in the region, including the area of Adi Badri irrefutably confirms that 'a gigantic river was flowing in almost WNW direction in the past. Its dimension was very large as it contained very high discharge and traversed a region where [...] metamorphic and quartzite [rocks] occur in abundance.'

The *Mahabharata* gives an account of the river which had already become partly invisible by its time.

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In the course of his pilgrimage to *tirthas* along the southern bank of the Sarasvati, Balarama finally reached a spot where ‘although the Sarasvati seems to be lost, yet persons crowned with ascetic success...and owing also to the coolness of the herbs and of the land there, know that the river has an invisible current through the bowels of the earth’.

Thus, Sarasvati is not a mythical but a real river which existed even till historical times.

## SINDHU-SARASVATI CIVILISATION

Sindhu is the ancient name of Indus. And Sarasvati was the main river along whose banks the civilization flourished, but this river later disappeared due to geo-climactic reasons.

However, if one tracks the old beds of this river using geological methods, one finds that this river still flows in some places in the form of the seasonal river Ghaggar in India and Hakra in Pakistan. This civilization should be, thus, re-named. More than 75% of the 1600

The civilization which is known as the Indus Valley Civilization should actually be called the Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization.

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settlements of IVC have been found in the Sarasvati valley—for example, Banawali (Picture 13) and Kalibangan in the Ghaggar Valley, and Ali Murad and Kot in the Hakra Valley. One is to find more than 100 early Harappan sites (2500-2200 BC) in Haryana, most of which lie in Kurukshetra, Ambala, Hisar, Bhiwani, Sonipat, Yamunanagar and Rohtak districts—mostly in the Sarasvati-Drishadvati Valley. The older sites are concentrated in the lower reaches of the Sarasvati, while the later sites are in the upper reaches near the Shiwaliks (as there was migration upwards after the drying up of the river in the lower reaches).

According to C 14 radio-dating, the ancient mounds in Bhirrana village (Picture 14) in Haryana, on the banks of the Ghaggar river, date back to 7570-6200 BC. This means that the site in Bhirrana is older than the one in Mehrgarh in Pakistan, which, according to the previous Pakistan-French study was considered the oldest Harappan site in the bracket of 6400-7000 BC. For many

In the light of recent excavations, Indian archaeologists have confirmed that Rakhigarhi (Picture 15) in Haryana is indeed the largest IVC site unearthed so far and it shows settlements of all the phases of IVC, that is, early, mature as well as later phases.

years, Mohenjodaro (now in Pakistan) was believed to be the largest IVC site.

And, Rakhigarhi lies in the Sarasvati-Drishadvati Valley. Six of the seven mounds found in Rakhigarhi date back to 7500 BC, hence, it is a very old site as well. The antiquity of Bhirrana and the expanse of Rakhigarhi clearly challenges the established notion that the Harappan civilization originated in Sind, now in Pakistan. Given the importance of the River Sarasvati, is it unjustified to ask for a renaming of the civilization as Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization?

### **The Harappan Civilization is the Vedic Civilization**

The description of the Sarasvati in the Rgveda gives rise to an important question: We saw that the Sarasvati was a mighty river in full vigour during the time of the Rgveda. By the time we came to the next generation of literature, the Vedic Brahmanas, a few of them testify—for the first time—that the river disappears at a place called Vinashana—a word meaning ‘loss’. The Jaiminiya Brahmana and the Mahabharata also contain descriptions of earthquakes in this region.

Now,

- (i) if Sarasvati and Indus together formed what is known till date as the Indus Valley or Harappan

Civilization and Sarasvati dried up by the end of this civilization, and

(ii) if Rgveda describes the Sarasvati in full vigour, then, how can we continue to say that the Harappan Civilization preceded the Vedic Age? It is logically not possible. Evidence does not support the claim that the Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization preceded the Vedic civilization. On the contrary, all kinds of evidence suggest that the Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization *is* the Vedic civilization. Indian archaeologists like B B Lal, S P Gupta, V N Misra, Dilip Chakrabarti and others uphold this view.

Let us approach the issue from another angle. How is it that this false notion come to gain ground that the Vedic civilization followed the Harappan Civilization? The reason was as accidental as this: Way back in the nineteenth century, Friedrich Max Müller declared that the Vedas can be dated to circa 1200 BC. The basis of this estimate was quite arbitrary. The scientific techniques of assessing the antiquity of objects and texts were not yet well-developed. Furthermore, later, he himself clarified that it was merely a tentative position and that he was suggesting a minimum date—the Vedas could be older than that. Although Max Müller qualified his own position regarding the antiquity of the Rgveda, it left a permanent dent on the historiography of ancient India. Thus, when the first cities of the “Harappan

“civilization” were discovered by archaeologists, and their antiquity was assessed to be older than 1200 BC, it was quickly declared as pre-Vedic. And to this day, this dating continues to be accepted by most people without being assessed critically in the light of scientific findings! There are different kinds of evidence to suggest cultural continuity between the so-called Harappan and Vedic civilizations, which would mean that they were the one and the same civilization. The archaeological sites are the material artefact of that civilization and the Vedas are the literary artefact.

### **Conclusion**

We can thus conclude:

The Sarasvati is not a mythical entity but a real river that existed historically.

The existence of River Sarasvati proves that the Harappan and Vedic civilizations are the same.

If these two civilizations are the same, then it follows that the Aryans never came from outside, but were indigenous people of this land.

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### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *giribhyah asamudrat*, Rgveda (RV) 7.95.2

<sup>2</sup> *maho-arnah*, RV 1.3.12

<sup>3</sup> *charati roruvat*, RV 6.61.8

<sup>4</sup> *ghora*, RV 6.61.7

<sup>5</sup> *pra-sasre*, RV 7.95.1

<sup>6</sup> *akavari*, RV 7.96.3

<sup>7</sup> *apasam apastama*, RV 6.61.13

<sup>8</sup> *yasyah amah ananto*, RV 6.61.8

<sup>9</sup> *vajini-vati*, RV 7.96.3

<sup>10</sup> *bhureh rayah chetanti*, RV 7.95.2

<sup>11</sup> *vajeshu vajini*, RV 6.61.6

<sup>12</sup> *bhadra*, RV 7.96.3

<sup>13</sup> *sunritanam chodayitri*, RV 1.3.11

<sup>14</sup> *sumatinam chetanti*, RV 1.3.11

<sup>15</sup> *nadinam suchiryati*, RV 7.95.2

<sup>16</sup> *pavaka*, RV 1.3.10

<sup>17</sup> *priya priyasu*, RV 6.61.10

<sup>18</sup> *mahimna mahina*, RV 6.61.13

<sup>19</sup> *ambitame naditame devitame*, RV

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## **Indian History by Indians**

Arpita Mitra

“A nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world.” - Swami Vivekananda

The question arises—why do we need to know our history? The probable answers seem to be—to know who we are, to love our country, to have shraddha and faith in ourselves and to excel in national and individual lives. In the words of Sister Nivedita, ‘We love that which we think of, we think of that which we know.’

Swamiji was once asked about the defect in the present university system? And his reply was, ‘It is almost wholly one of defects. Why, it is nothing but a perfect machine for turning out clerks...See how men are becoming destitute of Shraddhâ and faith. They assert that the Gita is only an interpolation, and that the Vedas are but rustic songs! They like to master every detail concerning things and nations outside of India, but if you ask them, they do not know even the names

of their own forefathers up to the seventh generation, not to speak of the fourteenth!'

He had continued elsewhere that a nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world. "Do you believe that one who has such faith and pride as to feel, 'I come of noble descent', can ever turn out to be bad? How could that be? That faith in himself would curb his actions and feelings, so much so that he would rather die than commit wrong. So a national history keeps a nation well-restrained and does not allow it to sink so low." A simple example is of our ancient well-developed drainage system in the Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilisation (Picture 16) which has been proved through large drain pipes excavated at Kalibangan on the banks of Sarasvati River (now Ghaggar) in Rajasthan. And the present is garbage, garbage everywhere! This photo (Picture 17) (dated 22 August 2015) shows garbage dumped inside the fenced premises of the ancient site of Rakhigarhi in Haryana—now believed to be the largest site of the Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilisation.

Swamiji maintains that, "Oh, I know you will say, 'But we have not such a history!' No, there is not any, according to those who think like you. Neither is there any, according to your big university scholars; and so also think those who, having travelled through the West

in one great rush, come back dressed in European style and assert, ‘We have nothing, we are barbarians.’ Of course, we have no history exactly like that of other countries. Suppose we take rice, and the Englishmen do not. Would you for that reason imagine that they all die of starvation, and are going to be exterminated? They live quite well on what they can easily procure or produce in their own country and what is suited to them. Similarly, we have our own history exactly as it ought to have been for us. Will that history be made extinct by shutting your eyes and crying, ‘Alas! We have no history!’ Those who have eyes to see find a luminous history there, and on the strength of that they know the nation is still alive. But that history has to be rewritten. It should be restated and suited to the understanding and ways of thinking which our men have acquired in the present age through Western education.”

Sister Nivedita also lays stress on the same idea when she says that, ‘Throw yourselves, children of India, into the worship of...your whole past. Strive passionately for knowledge. Yours are the spades and mattocks of this excavation. For with you and not with the foreigner, are the thought and language that will make it easy to unearth the old significance. India’s whole hope lies in a deeper research, a more rigid investigation of facts.’

Indian historiography is still largely a prisoner of foreign paradigms. These paradigms might work well in fields like physics or chemistry, but when it comes to understanding the history of our own country—a country whose civilisation is so unique in the world—the influence of foreign paradigms distorts our view and destroys the possibility of any genuine understanding of our past. If one has to understand India, one has to turn one's face completely towards India,...

...instead of looking west. We have to know our country. Foreign technology can be used for that purpose, but not foreign understanding. Indian history is to be understood on its own terms.

After a brief stay at Porbandar (circa 1891-1892), Swamiji as a wandering monk reached Dwaraka, holy with the innumerable memories and legends of Sri Krishna. But of its glories nothing remains at present. Now the ocean roars in tumult over the place where once the powerful Yadava lived and where once stood a great capital of which Sri Krishna was the reigning prince. Gazing all over the ocean, waves of agony rose in the mind of Swamiji at the thought that nothing but

ruins remained of great India. He sat on the shore and yearned ardently to fathom the contents of the future. Then rising as from a dream he went to Sarada Math (a monastery founded by Adi Shankaracharya) where he was assigned a room. There in the silence of his cell, he saw a great light - the resplendent future of India.

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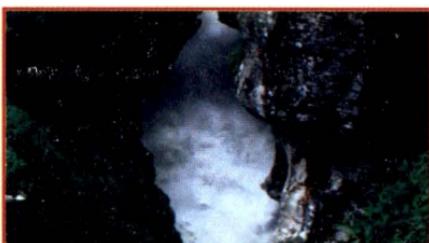
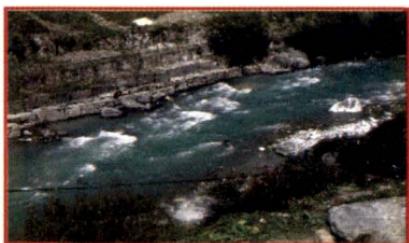
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# THE SARASWATI RIVER





पावका नः सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती ।  
 यतं वष्टु धियावसु ॥ Rigveda 1/3/  
 वोदयित्री सुनृतानां चेतन्ति सुमतिनां ॥  
 यतं दधे सरस्वती ॥ Rigveda 1/3/11



**"I saw an old man seated  
on the bank of the great river.  
Wave upon wave of darkness  
was rolling in upon him,  
and he was chanting from the Rig-Veda.  
Then I awoke and went on chanting.  
They were the tones that we used long ago."**

— Swami Vivekananda

